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THE FRANCOPHONE SUMMITS:

A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

Current Issue Review

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The Francophone Summits: A Canadian Perspective

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THE FRANCOPHONE SUMMITS:
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ISSUE DEFINITION

Canada's participation in the international French-speaking community, an extension of national bilingualism to the international scene, is an essential component of the federal government's foreign policy. The First Conference of Heads of State and Government of Countries Having the Use of the French Language in Common, held in Paris in February 1986, constituted a major step in building the international French-speaking community. This Current Issue Review will briefly look at the decisions taken at that summit and at the summit held in Quebec in September 1987. It will also summarize the steps taken to implement the activities agreed upon at the Paris Summit, with particular emphasis on Canada's contribution.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

A. The Paris Summit

One of the obstacles preventing a Summit of Heads of State and Government was for a long time the disagreement between the federal government and the Quebec government on the status and position to be granted to the latter at such a meeting. The agreement on this issue concluded by both governments on 7 November 1985 made it possible to hold preparatory meetings for a first summit. Following the preparatory

conference of the Ministers of External Affairs on 14 December 1985 in Paris, it was officially announced that the Conference of Heads of State and Government of Countries Having the Use of the French Language in Common would be held in Paris on 17, 18 and 19 February 1986.

Forty-one delegations participated in the Paris Summit: 15 were led by their heads of state, 12 by their head of government, and the others by ministers or ambassadors. Louisiana was invited to attend ceremonial sessions as a special guest. The Canadian delegation, headed by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, included representatives of the Ontario and Manitoba governments, as well as the President of the Federation of Francophones outside Quebec. As member governments, Quebec and New Brunswick each sent delegations to the summit meeting.

The agenda adopted included the following items: the world political situation; world economic situation; future challenges: development, communications and culture; the future of Francophone multilateral institutions; and the use of the common language. During the closing session, Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa presented the general report of the Conference. He then invited the heads of state and government to attend a second summit in Quebec City. The delegation heads had unanimously agreed beforehand to accept the invitation which was formally extended by the Government of Canada, although both Canada and Quebec would share the duties of host government.

At the Paris Summit, 96 proposals were adopted, 28 of which were to be implemented immediately. Delegates to the Summit decided to set up a simple structure to follow up on the resolutions adopted. They established a Follow-up Committee composed of the personal representatives of 11 heads of state and government* and created networks dealing with the main areas discussed in the Summit: development (agriculture and energy), culture and communications, scientific information and technical development, and the concerns of the language "industry." The Follow-up Committee was given responsibility for coordinating implementation of decisions made at the Summit in the area of cooperation, and for putting forward some ideas on the future of international Francophone institutions. The

* Belgium, Burundi, Canada, Comoros, France, Lebanon, Mali, Morocco, Quebec, Senegal and Zaire.

Committee was particularly asked to make proposals to develop financing methods and structures of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT), so that they could best carry out the tasks entrusted to them as a result of Summit decisions.

Canada played a major role in the first Francophone Summit, both in terms of the financial commitments announced and the statements made. Ongoing cooperation was the order of the day between the Canadian and Quebec delegations which tabled a number of joint or complementary proposals. Canada took full advantage of the opportunities presented by the Summit to assert its leadership within the international French-speaking community.

B. Follow-up on the Paris Summit

The International Follow-up Committee appointed leading figures from each sector to head the five networks. The Canadian Government relieved Radio-Canada television Vice-President Pierre Desroches of his duties so that he could fully devote himself to serving as a network head. Since the Follow-up Committee and networks had no budget of their own, they had to rely on the voluntary contributions of partners to implement each project. It was also agreed that ACCT would allocate FF14,000,000* from its 1987 budget for the implementation of projects approved by the Summit, in close cooperation with the Follow-up Committee.

1. Agriculture Network

The Network Head organized two specialist missions whose objective was to study the operations and problems of existing training centres for agronomists in a rural environment and suggest ways of developing them. The specialists' findings were to constitute the basis for program proposals developed for the Quebec Summit. France and Belgium were

* CAN \$1 = FF4.3 approximately.

in charge of various activities related to agronomic training centres and crafts training centres. Canada played an active role in this network's activities particularly in the two specialist missions.

2. Energy Network

The Network Head set up an advisory committee consisting of 14 members (including Canada and Quebec) to help with the implementation of several projects. France is in charge of the Energy Guide project, which aims to draw up an inventory of energy technology and potential in terms of the needs of the developing countries. The first part, focused on demand, was completed for the Quebec Summit, but the second part, which will deal with the various forms of energy, will be finished only in 1988. The Guide will be supplemented by a list of companies that the French-speaking community in Belgium in charge of drawing up.

As part of its commitment to spend FF10,000,000 over five years to distribute lighting equipment powered by photoelectric batteries (solar energy) in the countries of the Sahel, France issued an international call for tenders from Francophone nations. The network also worked on developing a specific proposal concerning the Energy Institute to be submitted at the Quebec Summit. At the Paris Summit it had been decided to create the Institute to foster cooperation among Francophone nations in projects related to energy development. The technical assistance and training program for Southern technicians is also being implemented: the Quebec government announced the setting up of a hydroelectric power program, and the federal government, which participated actively in all network meetings, launched an oil company management training program. The cost of this program, spread over five years, is estimated at \$10 million. The École des hautes études commerciales in Montreal is responsible for this advanced studies program, and the first group of students will be in Canada in January 1988.

3. Culture and Communications Network

The Culture and Communications Network had a number of achievements to its credit, particularly in the area of the cultural industries. For example, the French authorities made a section of the 7th Salon du livre de Paris (18-25 March 1987) available to writers and publishers from Francophone countries. Seven titles from the Francophone paperback collection were launched at the Quebec Summit. Canada and Quebec jointly funded the publication of two titles in this collection: L'Amélanchier, a novel by Jacques Ferron, and Ces enfants de ma vie, a collection of novellas by Gabrielle Roy. Various projects, studies and seminars were also funded by the ACCT.

In the area of communications, the network coordinated implementation of a number of decisions related to the development and enrichment of Francophone audio-visual activities. Thus, the Société de radio-télévision française d'outre-mer (RF0) has developed its AITV service which will collect and distribute news items for television, particularly by improving its operational relations with Francophone African television services and by trying to find new outlets for its programs, including non-Francophone areas. With a view to increasing circulation of television material, the French authorities proposed the creation of a Centre d'échanges multilatéraux d'actualités francophones (CEMAF) (Centre for Multilateral Exchange of Francophone News), which would become a key component of the future Agence francophone d'images télévisées (International Francophone Television Agency). The Network Head also asked the ACCT and the Conseil international des radios-télévisions d'expression française (CIRTEF) (International Council of French-language Radio and Television) to help with the implementation of various projects, including the creation of a support fund for television production and the setting up of a television program bank.

The extension of TV 5, the French-language television service currently distributed by satellite in Europe, was achieved through various means. Promotional activities were undertaken with European cable distributors. The participation of African television services in TV 5 programming, which was coordinated by CIRTEF, did in fact begin on

18 February 1987 and resulted in 60 minutes of programming every two weeks. Significant progress was achieved concerning the extension of TV 5 to North America. On 30 November last the Canadian Radio and Television Commission granted a licence to the Quebec-Canada Television Consortium which said it would be ready to go on the air in April 1988. Initially, the Quebec-Canada TV 5 programs will be distributed to cable distribution networks in Quebec currently retransmitting TVFQ 99 which presents a selection of programs produced by the three French national channels. Subsequently, the service will be extended across Canada and to the North East of the United States. By using another satellite, it will eventually be possible to extend the service to Louisiana and the Caribbean. A feasibility study on the broadcasting of TV 5 to Africa has also been conducted.

The Canadian and Quebec Communications Departments have contributed actively and provided considerable financial support for the implementation of the main projects of the network, particularly in the area of communications. For example, they financed a feasibility study to determine the best way of setting up an international French-language radio network, and another study on the feasibility of a Centre international francophone de formation à distance (CIFFAD) (International Distance Education Centre). Furthermore, in conjunction with CIDA and the ACCT, the Canadian and Quebec Communications Departments financed a pilot project in management training by distance education. This project, which linked the national schools of public administration in Quebec, Senegal and the Ivory Coast, was aimed at testing a 15-week program exchange and comparing and assessing new technologies (such as audio and video-conferences, etc.) as teaching tools.

4. Scientific Information and Technological Development Network

The Canadian and Quebec governments and the ACCT jointly organized two seminars on Francophone software. The first, held in Montreal from 6 May to 15 May 1986, was the first Paris Summit proposal to be implemented. The second seminar, held in Montreal from 29 May to 6 June, brought together over 80 computer software specialists from

20 Francophone countries. They made recommendations which enabled the network to submit proposals for specific actions to be taken at the Quebec Summit.

In the area of terminological and neological data, the network supported the initiatives of the Conseil international de la langue française (CILF) (International Council of the French Language), particularly the updating of a catalogue of scientific and technical dictionaries. It organized a joint study by the Canadian Terminology Bank (Termium), Banque de terminologie du Québec (BTQ), Banque des communautés européennes (Eurodicautom) and three leading French banks on the feasibility of linking them and making them accessible to the entire French-speaking world.

Created in response to a Canadian initiative, the Banque internationale d'information sur les États francophones (BIEF) (International Databank on Francophone States) will give participating libraries in each country access to documentary sources on it in other Francophone countries. Canada, which was in charge of the project, completed its inventory of documents on other Francophone states, and took the opportunity provided by the Quebec Summit to present all heads of delegations with the Canadian bibliographic inventory for their particular countries. France and Belgium are working on their inventories, and states involved in the Summit have been asked to contribute. Canadian missions to France, Belgium, Haiti, Tunisia and Senegal led to close cooperation between those countries and the BIEF.

Implementation of the project to circulate French-language scientific and technical publications was made possible through an allocation of FF1,000,000 from the ACCT budget. Over 160 national and university libraries will benefit from this project, which promotes the circulation of 110 scientific journals (not 200 as projected).

5. Language Industries Network

The activities of this network showed that a number of projects in which it is involved require lengthy studies. In the context of creating an international prize for innovation in the language

industries, the ACCT drew up a schedule of conditions for the organization and award of the prize in question, which will be given out for the first time in 1988. The program for training computer engineers and linguists began in the fall of 1987 with a first training course in Evry, France. Production of a portable model of the CGFTA University of Grenoble (France) computer-assisted translation system was considered premature, but a prototype was presented at the Quebec City Summit. Consultations are still going on regarding the model of the new French-language computerized thesaurus. Canada participated in all network projects.

6. Non-Network Projects

On the initiative of one or more participants, programs were also set up to act upon recommendations of the Paris Summit which did not fall into the framework of the five networks. Thus, Canada participated in seven seminars aimed at setting up an international baccalaureate program that will be recognized throughout the Francophone world, and also took part in a conference on French in international organizations, held in Paris from 29 June to 1 July 1987. This conference served to make the international community aware of the difficult conditions imposed on the use of French in such organizations. An international fund for assisting translation and interpretation during international conferences and meetings organized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was set up through a contribution of FF200,000 from the ACCT. A multilateral scholarship assistance fund was also created to allow the nationals of less-favoured Francophone countries to send their children to French schools when assigned to foreign countries (especially the United States). Canada contributed \$100,000 to this fund.

Canada also initiated and provided most of the funding for three major projects: a universal immunization program for Francophone countries, funded by CIDA; a Francophone scholarships program (80 scholarships awarded in 1987, increasing to a maximum of 550); and the Grand Prix de la francophonie, launched by a Canadian contribution of \$400,000 to the Académie française. Further contributions came from Canadian businesses, the French government and the Académie itself.

7. Canadian Government Contribution

The Canadian government contributed \$8,332,347 to the follow-up of the Paris Summit. This amount includes expenditure related to of Canadian participation in the work of the five networks, money allocated to implementing projects stemming from network activities, and contributions made to non-network programs. Canada also made commitments requiring expenditure beyond 1987, particularly in relation to the Francophone scholarships program (\$30 million from 1987 to 1992), the oil company management training program (\$10 million from 1987 to 1992), the universal immunization program in Francophone countries (\$10 million over five years) and the extension of TV 5 to North America.

8. Conclusion

In its report to the heads of state and government prepared for the Quebec Summit, the International Follow-up Committee stated that the 28 projects which the Paris Summit had proposed should be begun immediately had been put in motion. Clearly, a large number of the projects initiated since February 1986 will be ongoing for several years, and some may even become permanent cooperative projects between countries having the use of the French language in common. Undoubtedly, the greatest achievement of the International Follow-up Committee and the networks under it is its promotion of a new form of cooperation within the Francophone community.

C. The Quebec Summit*

The second Conference of Heads of State and Government Having the Use of the French Language in Common was held in Quebec City from 2 to 4 September 1987. The governments of Canada and Quebec were

* Further details will be added to this section when the Summit proceedings are available.

hosts of this Summit, with the participation of the New Brunswick government. Forty delegations, most of which were led by heads of state and government, took part in the Summit.

1. Political and Economic Issues

Participants in the Quebec Summit adopted nine resolutions, eight of them unanimously. Canada was unable to support all the components of the resolution on the Middle East. While it did support the idea of convening an international conference, it refused to approve the inclusion in the resolution of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Canada claimed that this would be tantamount to recognizing the need to create an independent state and would therefore prejudice the outcome of the conference.

Regarding South Africa, participants reaffirmed "their vigorous and resolute condemnation of the unacceptable system of apartheid." The resolution was somewhat more guarded with respect to sanctions against the Pretoria government, only making a commitment to "maintain economic and political pressures against the government of South Africa and to continue to take effective individual and collective action until such time as it dismantles apartheid."

The other resolutions concerned the world economic situation, the creation of a fund made up of voluntary contributions for Lebanon and Chad, the Iran-Iraq conflict, agriculture and environmental protection, erosion control in Haiti and natural disasters.

2. Cooperation and Development Issues

Participants in the Quebec Summit endorsed approximately 100 projects, some of which were an extension of proposals adopted in Paris, while others were proposals for new activities. Thus, they approved the structure, statutes and funding of the Institut international de l'énergie (International Energy Institute). The aim of this institute, which will be established in Quebec City, will be to promote cooperation and the

dissemination of knowledge among Francophone countries. In the agricultural area, France and Canada made a commitment to provide funding for agronomic training centres in Africa.

The Quebec Summit reaffirmed the objective endorsed in Paris to widen and enhance Francophone audio-visual activities, particularly through the extension of TV 5, the international French-language television network transmitted by satellite, and the creation of the Agence francophone d'images télévisées (International Francophone Television Agency). Furthermore, the Centre international de formation à distance (International Francophone Distance Education Centre) will be set up with a view to establishing in Canada an international communications network for Francophone training institutions, to allow the broadcasting of courses on various subjects.

With respect to scientific information and technological development, delegates to the Quebec Summit approved the establishment of a Université des réseaux d'expression française (University of French-speaking Networks). This open university, a component of the Association des universités partiellement ou entièrement de langue française (AUPELF), (Association of Partially or Wholly French-language Universities) will promote ongoing exchanges between researchers and will mobilize all resources for the training of students and researchers. Delegates also approved the rules for awarding the international prize for innovation in the language industries, the establishment of which had been decided upon in Paris.

3. Implementing the Summit Decisions

The formula agreed upon in Paris to ensure the implementation of the Summit decisions was continued in Quebec City. A follow-up committee composed of 11 personal representatives of heads of state and government will be responsible for ensuring that the projects approved at the Summit are carried out. The five networks established in Paris will continue to function under the authority of this follow-up committee. During the period leading up to the Third Summit, slated for 1989, the

Follow-up Committee will be examining the respective roles of the l'Agence de coopération culturelle et technique (ACCT) (Cultural and Technical Cooperation Agency), of the networks and of other Francophone agencies and will be considered particularly ways and means of integrating the networks with the ACCT.

Carrying out the projects approved at the Quebec Summit will be greatly facilitated by the specific financial commitments made to many of them. Canada has committed itself to spending \$17.9 million over the next two years on projects approved in Quebec City. The Communications and Culture and the Agriculture Networks will share the bulk of this amount, receiving \$7 million and \$5 million respectively. Moreover, in addition to allocating \$700,000 toward the establishment of the Energy Institute, Quebec has announced that it will contribute \$4 million to a special fund to be administered by the ACCT, and which will be applied multilaterally to summit projects.

D. Review and Future Prospects

The principal achievement of the Paris Summit is that it took place. It is generally agreed that some important decisions were reached there, particularly the selection of priority areas for future cooperation by French-speaking countries, and also the initiation of the process to restructure the ACCT. The Second Summit was of vital importance since it demonstrated beyond doubt that the process started in Paris was worth continuing. The Quebec Summit succeeded in that it ensured the continued existence of a supreme Francophone authority, which is scheduled to meet again in Dakar in 1989. The Summit owes its success chiefly to agreement reached on several political and economic questions and to the tangible progress made in the area of cooperation.

To clarify any uncertainties that might still exist as to the purpose of Francophone summits, delegates to the Quebec Summit adopted a Declaration of Solidarity at the conclusion of the meeting. The Declaration stipulated that these "periodic meetings constitute an occasion for

frank and open dialogue, for consultation on political, economic and cooperative issues and matters of common interest."

Organizers of the Quebec Summit suggested that the institution was too fragile to deal officially with the question of human rights. The President of France and the Prime Minister of Canada nevertheless touched on the subject in their opening addresses. The community of countries having the use of the French language in common will certainly not be able to claim maturity until it has confronted the thorny problem of the violation of human rights by many of its member countries.

The decisions made with regard to cooperative issues clearly show that the French language is used as a development tool. In each of the five principal sectors of cooperation reviewed, emphasis was put on training, the exchange of scientific knowledge and the transfer and adaptation of new technologies. The policy directions adopted in Paris were consolidated and enhanced in Quebec City. The projects approved in Quebec City respond to clearly defined needs and largely grew out of the work accomplished by the networks as a follow-up to the Paris Summit. Funds have been committed for most of the some hundred projects adopted in Quebec City, a clear indication that the foundations of la francophonie are being solidly laid. In fact, if we add the commitments made as a result of the Paris Summit and those undertaken by Quebec, it can be seen that the budget for 1988 and 1989 is approximately \$150 million, of which Canada is to contribute \$52 million.

Of course, in terms of political influence, the Commonwealth can be said to be an established body as compared with the community of countries having the use of the French language in common, which has held only its second conference at the highest political level. However, in the field of cooperation, both organizations appear to be heading more and more in the same direction. Canada emerged at the Quebec Summit with its role as a major partner in the Francophone community paralleling its long-standing role as a member of the Commonwealth.

CHRONOLOGY

- 2 November 1978 - When asked during a press conference about the plan for a summit of heads of state and government of Francophone countries, the President of Senegal, Mr. Léopold Senghor, stated in Ottawa that a committee of five experts, including himself, a representative from France, one from Canada, and two from Africa had no objection to the holding of a Francophone summit conference in which the Quebec government would not take part. He stated that the participation of the provinces was solely the responsibility of federal authorities. A few hours after Mr. Senghor's statement, the French government issued a brief communiqué saying that it considered it unthinkable to hold a summit of Francophone countries without the participation of Quebec.
- 3 December 1980 - The President of Senegal, Mr. Léopold Senghor, announced the cancellation of the meeting of ministers of foreign affairs of Francophone countries, which was to have taken place at Dakar on 8 and 9 December. He explained that the decision was taken "to give parties time to reach an agreement on the problem of Quebec representation." President Senghor's announcement followed France's decision not to attend the Dakar meeting since Quebec was not satisfied with the representation role offered to it within the Canadian delegation (that of a senior official rather than a minister). The Dakar meeting was to have prepared for a summit of heads of state and government with a view to organizing an organic community of Francophone countries.
- January 1983 - Mr. Régis Debray, an advisor to President François Mitterand on cultural affairs and the Third World, was involved in sensitive mediation between Quebec and Ottawa to try to find a solution to the problem which had been blocking the plan for a Francophone organic community since 1978.
- 8 November 1985 - The text of the agreement reached the previous day between the federal and Quebec governments on the summit of French-speaking countries was made public. The Premier of Quebec would sit beside the Prime Minister at the conference table throughout the Summit, with Quebec identified by the designation "Canada-Quebec" and by the Quebec flag. During the first part of the Summit, which would deal with the world political and economic situation, the Premier

would act as an "interested observer," although he would be able to speak on questions that concerned Quebec "after consultation and with the agreement of the Prime Minister." During the second part of the Summit, on cooperation and development, the government of Quebec would participate fully in the debates and the work, in accordance with ACCT's methods and practices.

- 6 December 1985 - The Prime Minister of Canada announced the ratification of an agreement between the federal and New Brunswick governments regarding the Francophone Summit. This agreement was identical in every respect to the one signed with the Quebec government on 7 November 1985.
- 14 December 1985 - Following the preparatory conference of ministers of foreign affairs, it was announced that the Summit of Heads of State and Governments of French-speaking Countries would be held in Paris on 17, 18 and 19 February 1986.
- 17-19 February 1986 - The first Conference of Heads of State and Government of Countries Having the Use of the French Language in Common was held in Paris. Forty-one delegations endorsed 96 projects, 28 of which were considered priorities. Delegates unanimously agreed to hold their second Summit meeting in Quebec City.
- 19 February 1986 - The Governments of Canada and Quebec signed a protocol agreement respecting organizational procedures for the second Francophone Summit slated to be held in Quebec City in September 1987. Canada would be extending the invitations to attend the Summit, but Canada and Quebec would share the duties of host government. The Prime Minister of Canada would act as general Summit chairman, while the Premier of Quebec would chair the second portion of the Summit during which the focus would be on cultural and technical cooperation.
- 2-4 September 1987 - The Second Conference of Heads of State and Government Having the Use of the French Language in Common was held in Quebec City. Forty delegations attended the conference.
- 30 October 1987 - The International Follow-up Committee of the Quebec Summit held its first meeting in Paris under the chairmanship of Mr. Lucien Bouchard. The Committee designated the network heads. Mr. Pierre Desroches (Canada) and Mr. Christian Latortue (Quebec) continued respectively in their positions as Heads of the

Culture and Communications Network and the Energy
Network.

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